The Market

London has Petticoat Lane, Paris the Marché Bastille and Madrid, El Rastro but none can compare with Alqueria's Conemallo Market. The Conemallo is held weekly on waste ground to the west of the Village where the goats, sheep and feral cats feed, play and breed. Perhaps not as big as those in Europe's capital cities but just as colourful with the same variety of stalls and just as many pickpockets. One enterprising Villager has a stall selling 'unpickable' wallets while his brother, on another stall sells the famous 'never-fail-little-gem-wallet-picking-kit' as used by Europe's major villains.

As crowds mill about the stalls, barter noisily over prices, examine goods and search frantically for disappeared wallets so the ambience becomes electrifying. If we join the would-be punters and examine the goods on offer we find four stalls stand out from the rest.

Rodriquez, the most hated man in Alqueria and 'Jefe' to the Newcomer's barrio sells, among other things neo-fascists insignia, 'The Collected Autobiographies of the World's Psychopaths' and the newly published 'Malice Made Easy' by I. Screwemall. Although his clientele is rather limited at the Market proper he does a roaring mail-order trade mainly to political organizations in northern Europe.

The next stall of interest is Locos Paco's. Here one can by anything for your pet Saharan Dung Beetle. A faux-diamond encrusted collar, a kennel or a variety of dung beetle treats such 'liquor blesbok droppings' or 'caramelised dromedary faeces'. His best selling line is the whip and harness designed for dung beetle racing but purchased by those with an altogether different purpose in mind.

We now come across Antonio Poyato's Remitroot stall. Here Remitroot in all its forms is on offer with the added bonus of free Remitroot wine tasting. Many comatose bodies litter the ground around Poyato's untidy table, upturned glasses and

empty bottles are all awash with spilt liquor and wine. Remitroot the aphrodisiac changes hands in plain brown parcels, the recipients making off through the crowd with expectant grins and twitching groins.

Manuela, as might be expected has a stall littered with love potions, underclothing guaranteed to warm up the coldest of bodies and a range of appliances which stretch among other things the imagination to its limits. Manuela's own preferred 'love potion' is simply to grab the male in question, drag him to a suitably deserted and comfortable location and letting natural pheromones do the rest.

Take a stroll around this singular market, keep your hand firmly on your wallet and experience the sights, sounds and aromas on offer. On no account however be tempted to sample the traditional cuisine, that is only for the brave or terminally daft.